

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ORIGIN SS-25

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TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 211479

EXDIS, FOR AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PDIP, SY, US, PINT, XF

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE TO THE SYRIAN PRESIDENT

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT TO
PRESIDENT AL-ASSAD WHICH YOU ARE AUTHORIZED TO PRESENT
DURING YOUR PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS OR AT EARLIEST
APPROPRIATE MOMENT (THERE WILL BE NO RPT NO SIGNED
ORIGINAL). BEGIN TEXT:

HIS EXCELLENCY
HAFIZ AL-ASSAD
PRESIDENT OF THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
DAMASCUS

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

I HAVE ASKED OUR NEW AMBASSADOR TO SYRIA, TALCOTT W.
SEELYE, TO DELIVER THIS MESSAGE TO YOU. AMBASSADOR
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SEELYE HAS MY FULL CONFIDENCE AND I HAVE ENTRUSTED HIM WITH
THE IMPORTANT TASK OF BROADENING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
OUR TWO COUNTRIES. WITH AMBASSADOR SEELYE'S HELP, I VERY
MUCH HOPE TO MAINTAIN THE SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP AND CANDOR
WHICH HAS CHARACTERIZED OUR EXCHANGES OF VIEW SINCE WE
MET IN GENEVA.

IN MY MESSAGE OF AUGUST 16, I TOLD YOU OF MY REASONS FOR CONVENING A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SADAT AND PRIME MINISTER BEGIN AT CAMP DAVID. YOU ARE, OF COURSE, AWARE OF MY BELIEF THAT SYRIA, AS WELL AS OTHER ARAB PARTIES TO THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT, SHOULD BE PARTICIPANTS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS AT THE APPROPRIATE STAGE. I WANT YOU TO BE ASSURED, MR. PRESIDENT, THAT, WHILE WE ARE NOW WORKING WITHIN THE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI CONTEXT, OUR ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE REMAINS A COMPREHENSIVE AND JUST SETTLEMENT. AS WE PROCEED, I WILL BE DEPENDING UPON AMBASSADOR SEELYE TO KEEP YOU AND FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM APPRISED OF DEVELOPMENTS AND TO SERVE AS A CHANNEL FOR CONVEYING TO ME YOUR OWN THOUGHTS AND COMMENTS.

I WAS DISTRESSED BY THE VOTE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TO ELIMINATE OUR ECONOMIC PROGRAM FOR SYRIA IN FISCAL YEAR 1980. THIS IS NOT THE END OF OUR COMPLICATED LEGISLATIVE PROCESS, AND MY ADMINISTRATION WILL WORK HARD TO REVERSE THIS ACTION.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU MY CONCERN WITH THE TROUBLING EVENTS IN LEBANON. I HOPE THAT OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS WILL CONTINUE TO CONSULT CLOSELY AND COOPERATIVELY ON WAYS TO HELP BRING ABOUT A STABLE AND PEACEFUL SITUATION IN LEBANON AT LAST. WE SEE NO OTHER COURSE THAN TO SUPPORT A STRENGTHENED CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IN LEBANON
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WHICH CAN REBUILD NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND WORK FOR THE UNITY OF THE COUNTRY. I KNOW THAT YOU SHARE THAT OBJECTIVE.

AS I MENTIONED IN MY MESSAGE TO YOU LAST APRIL, I REMAIN WARMLY APPRECIATIVE OF THE PERSONAL ATTENTION YOU HAVE BEEN GIVING TO THE VERY HUMAN ISSUES OF INTEREST TO SYRIA'S JEWISH COMMUNITY. I HAVE BEEN VERY PLEASED THAT SEVERAL OF THE UNMARRIED SYRIAN WOMEN WHO HAVE COME TO THE UNITED STATES, THROUGH YOUR KIND HELP, HAVE FOUND HUSBANDS HERE WITHIN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF SYRIAN ORIGIN. IT IS A BEGINNING OF NEW TIES BETWEEN SYRIA AND THE UNITED STATES, SINCE THE PEOPLE OF THE COMMUNITY HERE OFTEN SPEAK ARABIC AND FOLLOW MANY OF THE CUSTOMS OF SYRIA'S JEWISH COMMUNITY. I HOPE THAT YOU WILL GIVE SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION TO THE PROPOSAL THAT A NEW GROUP OF UNMARRIED WOMEN PROCEED TO THE UNITED STATES FOR THE SAME PURPOSES AS THE LAST GROUP.

I WOULD VERY MUCH WELCOME ANY THOUGHTS YOU MIGHT WISH TO SEND ME OR GIVE TO AMBASSADOR SEELYE ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO NATIONS.

WITH WARM GOOD WISHES,

-- SINCERELY,

-- JIMMY CARTER

(END TEXT).

CHRISTOPHER

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